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SEPTEMBER 2009 GREAT LAKES WATER LEVEL SUMMARY

LAKE SUPERIOR

Lake Superior's water level rose 1 inch during September, as the lake neared its seasonal peak. Its September mean water level of 601.74 feet was 8 inches above chart datum, 2 inches higher than last year and 5 inches below its long-term average (LTA). Lake Superior's outflow through the St. Marys River was below average in September. The Lake Superior basin experienced dryer than average precipitation during September, with only 39% of average precipitation reported. Precip over the past 12 months is 80% of average. Lake Superior is forecasted to begin its seasonal decline in October, but remain 1 to 4 inches above last year's level through March of 2010. The lake is expected to be 3 to 6 inches above its chart datum through December, then 1 to 5 inches below chart datum in January, February and March. Lake Superior is forecasted to remain 5 to 6 inches below its LTA over the next 6 months.

LAKE MICHIGAN-HURON

Lake Michigan-Huron began its seasonal decline during September, with its water level 2 inches lower than last month. Its mean water level of 578.64 feet was 7 inches higher than last year, 14 inches higher than chart datum, but 6 inches below its LTA. Lake Michigan-Huron was 14 inches above its chart datum in September and is forecasted to remain above chart datum during the next 6 months. Lake Michigan-Huron's outflow through the St. Clair River was below average in September. The Lake Michigan-Huron basin experienced below average precipitation in August, but near average precipitation during the past 12 months. The lake is forecasted to be 6 to 7 inches below its LTA over the next 6 months, but remain 2 to 8 inches above its levels of a year ago during that same time period. Water levels are also forecasted to remain 4 to 11 inches above chart datum during the next 6 months.

LAKE ST. CLAIR

The level of Lake St. Clair fell 3 inches in September, as its seasonal decline continued. Its monthly mean water level of 574.57 feet was 5 inches higher than it was a year ago and 2 inches higher than its LTA. Lake St. Clair's outflow through the Detroit River was near average during the month of September. The latest 6-month forecast projects Lake St. Clair to be 4 to 5 inches higher than last year's levels through December, then 2 to 4 inches below last year's levels in January, February and March of 2010. The lake is predicted to be at or a few inches above its long term average during the next 6 months.

LAKE ERIE

Lake Erie also continued its seasonal decline in September. Its mean water level of 572.65 feet was 4 inches lower than last month's water level, 5 inches higher than last year and 3 inches higher than average. Precipitation in the Lake Erie basin was 80% of average in September but has been above average over the past 12 months. Outflow from Lake Erie into the Niagara River during September was near average. The latest six month forecast predicts Lake Erie will be 3 to 5 inches above its levels of a year ago through December, then near last year in January and February and 6 inches lower than last year in March. Lake Erie is also projected to be 2 to 4 inches above its LTA through March.

LAKE ONTARIO

Lake Ontario continued its seasonal decline in September, falling 10 inches during the month. Lake Ontario was 2 inches above its LTA and an inch lower than last year's level. Lake Ontario received below average precipitation in September and near average precipitation over the past 12 months. The Lake Ontario outflow through the St. Lawrence River was above average in September. The latest 6 month forecast projects Lake Ontario to be 1 to 13 inches below its levels of a year ago through March of 2010. Lake Ontario is also expected to remain 1 to 4 inches below its LTA during the same time period.